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ABSTRACT

The booklet presents 36 policy statements related to the provision of educational services to exceptional children in Ontario. These policy statements are updated versions of 31 statements formulated in 1973. The statements cluster in six major areas (sample subtopics in parentheses): (1) goals and commitments to the education of exceptional children and youth (provision of a variety of educational opportunities); (2) governmental responsibility for the provision of services to exceptional children and youth (inter-ministerial cooperation, curriculum research and development, establishment of instructional materials centers); (3) organization and administration for the education of exceptional children and youth within the local jurisdiction (staff development, certification); (4) identification, placement, assessment, and programming (labeling, wide range of services); (5) teacher recruitment, preparation, continuing education and evaluation (updating of qualifications, basic special education competencies for all teachers); and (6) evaluation in the education of exceptional children and youth (use of a variety of evaluation methods, annual reviews of student files. (CL)

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The Ontario Provincial Federation of Chapters

The Council For Exceptional Children 1982

We are not alike

Policies for Responsible Education

— Revised 1982

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Report of the Policy Statements Review Committee commissioned by The Ontario Federation of Chapters The Council For Exceptional Children

September 1982

policies for the education of exceptional children in ontario

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THE COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

We Are Not Alike: Policies For Education In Our Time, was originally published in 1973, by The Ontario Provincial Federation of Chapters, The Council For Exceptional Children.

We Are Not Alike: Policies For Responsible Education, an update of the aforementioned document, was prepared by the Policy Statements Review Committee to reflect the changes inherent in and projected by the introduction of "Responsibility Legislation" in Ontario — The Education Amendment Act, 1980 (Bill 82).

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INTRODUCTION

In December 1980, Royal Assent was given to Bill 82, an Act to amend The Education Act, 1974. Referred to as The Education Amendment Act, 1980, it is now incorporated with The Education Act, 1974 into a single volume known as the Education Act, R.S.O. 1980, Chapter 129.

To this point in the history of education in Ontario, the provision of permissive legislation in special education had prepared and paved the way for "Responsibility Legislation" as exemplified in Bill 82. The Ontario Provincial Federation of Chapters, The Council for Exceptional Children, is committed to, and strongly supports the philosophy inherent in this landmark legislation — **that every human life is unique and valuable and that each child should be provided with the opportunity to develop to full potential educationally.**

The Ontario Ministry of Education has attempted to provide a system which encourages boards of education to implement this philosophy in the delivery of programs and services to all children. Bill 82 mandates that the measures required to do this be fully in effect by September 1, 1985. The Minister of Education has been given regulatory power to ensure that school boards move steadily towards a full assumption of their responsibilities.

This regulation and direction is commended and fully supported by The Ontario Provincial Federation of Chapters, The Council for Exceptional Children.

RATIONALE

In 1973, The Ontario Federation of Chapters, C.E.C., compiled thirty-one policy statements related to the needs of exceptional children, entitled, **"We Are Not Alike: Policies For Education In Our Time."**

The insight and foresight of the writers of the original document and the relevance of the issues and directions presented, are gratefully acknowledged. Since that time, there has been a period of transition and progress in the provision of special education programs and services in the Province of Ontario.

This is reflected in the present organization of the Special Education Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Education. Through its association with the Governmental Relations Committee, CEC, it has demonstrated an increased awareness of the educational issues inherent in providing programs and services to exceptional children. The provisions of The Education Amendment Act, 1980 (Bill 82) are indicative of the positive direction being set by the Ministry as a whole, not only in providing programs and services for exceptional children, but for all children within the educational system. As a result, special education is not to be perceived as a separate stream of education. Special education administrators and teachers are working together with mainstream educators, so that through team efforts appropriate support for all children and youth in our educational systems will be provided.

We Are Not Alike: Policies For Responsible Education is intended to reflect both current trends and future directions in our continuing RESPONSIBILITY towards all exceptional children and youth in Ontario.

1 Goals And Commitments To The Education Of Exceptional Children And Youth

Policy Statement 1

All children and youth should be offered educational programs, suitable to their individual learning needs and abilities, exceptionalities notwithstanding.

Educators in both special and regular education should provide a variety of educational opportunities which will encourage the development of total individuals to their fullest potential.

Special education programs and services must be an integral part of the total educational service at both the provincial and local levels. This emphasis is reflected in curriculum documents produced by the Ontario Ministry of Education:

> "students who require special education services are not exclusively those who lack the ability to comprehend the subject matter of regular course offerings in the school. Minor adjustments in classroom procedure or school routine will enable some exceptional students to participate in most of the courses offered in the school. Courses should be designed at appropriate levels for exceptional students with learning problems in such subjects or programs as English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Visual Arts, Music, Family Studies, and Physical and Health Education...Planning special education programs for students with exceptionalities may require special provisions within a regular class, with or without special resource support; special class grouping on a full- or part-time basis; the grouping of numbers of students within a special purpose secondary school; or, any combination of these approaches.[1]"

Curriculum materials and procedures developed by local school boards reflect the spirit of statements, such as the preceding one, in terms of the provision of all programs designed to meet the needs of individual pupils to ensure equal educational opportunity.

The Council for Exceptional Children has issued a number of pertinent statements on the purposes of special education. One such important statement is found in the **Report on Professional Standards, 1966.**

> "The purposes of special education are no different from those of regular education in a democratic society. The focus is on the individual and his optimal developments as a skilled, free and purposeful person able to manage himself in an open society. When life in the open society is not feasible and special residential placements are required, the aim is still one of maximum development and freedom of the individual. The school programs play a crucially important role in the end.[2]"

This was followed by the position paper, **Basic Commitments and Responsibilities to Exceptional Children,** which was adopted in April, 1971.

> "The purpose of special education is to enlarge the variety of educational programs for all children so that the individualization of programs may be furthered as a way of fulfilling the fundamental purposes of education for all children, whatever their needs.[3]"

In 1971, the Ontario Ministry of Education issued a document entitled, **The Development of Comprehensive Programs and Services in Special Education,** encouraging boards to set goals and objectives to meet the needs of exceptional children. This manual, while not officially issued for use in the Province, did become a useful cornerstone in the establishment of many comprehensive special education programs currently found in Ontario.

Prior to December, 1980, The Education Act, 1974, contained permissive legislation for special education. A school board could, if it wished, provide special education programs and services for its exceptional pupils. Although most boards had developed a range of special education programs and services, The Education Amendment Act, 1980 removed the optional status of special education and made it the definite responsibility of all Ontario school boards to provide appropriate special education programs and services to meet the educational needs of all school-age children, regardless of exceptionality. Such programs and services will be provided in both English and French, as the case may be.

The Education Amendment Act, 1980 ensures three basic provisions:

(i) the **universal access** of **all** Ontario school age pupils to a publicly supported education, regardless of exceptionality;

(ii) the **provision** of special education programs and special education services that meet the needs of exceptional pupils;

(iii) the **involvement and participation of the parents or guardians** of exceptional pupils in the identification, placement and review of such pupils and their programs.

Many boards across Ontario had developed models of service delivery of varying degrees of effectiveness, during the 1940-1980 era. However, the proposed implementation procedures, planned to effect the intent of the new responsibility legislation, stimulated the planning and development of a comprehensive delivery of services model for each board.

Twenty-one Pilot Boards, selected by the Ministry, reflected a wide sampling of variations in board structures and service delivery systems across the province. During the school year 1980-81, field testing by the Pilot Boards took place under the skilled leadership of a Provincial Initiating Team provided by the Ministry of Education. This planned implementation process provided a model of the comprehensive approach, including specific guidelines, which was to be used by all boards in meeting the requirements of the legislation by 1985 — namely, that each public and separate school board in Ontario is required to have its own special education program fully implemented by September 1, 1985. This systematic procedure indicates the concern with which the Ontario Ministry of Education has approached its commitment to the education of exceptional children.

Trustees, administrators, teachers and parents have continued to demonstrate the commitment and understanding so vital to meeting the needs of exceptional children and youth. The high profile afforded special education has enhanced the potential for the development and delivery of highly specialized educational services which should benefit exceptional children and provide opportunities equal to those of other children for meaningful, purposeful, and fulfilling lives. The 1980's are presenting unusual opportunities for extending appropriate programs within each school system in the province. In response to professional attitudes and practice, exceptional children and youth will be afforded the opportunity to reach their highest potential as individuals and as contributing members of our society.

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[1] **Circular H.S.1,** Ontario Ministry of Education 1979-81.

[2] The Council for Exceptional Children: **Professional Standards for Personnel in Education of Exceptional Children,** Washington, D.C., 1966.

[3] The Council for Exceptional Children: **Basic Commitments and Responsibilities to Exceptional Children 1971 Delegate Assembly of the CEC.** A position paper by CEC Policies Commission, EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN, 38.181-187, 1971.

2 Governmental Responsibility For The Provision Of Services To Exceptional Children And Youth

Policy Statement 2

All provincial acts and regulations concerning the education of exceptional children should be compiled into one publication, with provision made for cyclical review.

The treatment, social services, and health acts concerning the care and treatment of children should also be compiled into one publication with provision made for cyclical review.

It is the responsibility of the Provincial Government to ensure that all exceptional children are protected in law and by provincial legislation in such a manner that their best interests are served in matters of education and treatment. It is also the responsibility of the Provincial Government to provide and monitor adequate financial resources essential to the delivery of education and treatment services commensurate with identified needs within local school systems and allied treatment services.

Over the years, schools have increasingly broadened their services to children and to their families. The demands of a changing and more knowledgeable society continue to intensify the need for additional services of a highly complex nature. The ultimate question of what role schools and other community resources should each play in meeting the needs of exceptional children and their families continues to be an issue. Many children and their families require coordinated services in health, recreation, and welfare, as well as in education. The need for clarification and specific role definitions are required to assist in the efficient and speedy delivery of appropriate services.

The Government of the Province of Ontario has accepted the responsibility to see that all exceptional children in the Province are educated according to their needs. This acceptance necessitates a compilation of all sections of provincial law which deal with the Government's responsibility for the education and treatment of exceptional children. The development of these two comprehensive publications will facilitate co-ordination between school boards and other community agencies to ensure the ultimate in programming and service for each child at the most reasonable expense without undue duplication or denial of essential services.

Policy Statement 3

Legislation should continue to be monitored to ensure that exceptional children maintain their right to an education and/or care and treatment and that appropriate services are delivered and supported through adequate funding.

Legislation should clearly define the appropriate educational or treatment/care programs and services to be provided by school boards or community services. A clear definition of the appropriate Ministry's responsibilities is required. The delivery of appropriate services for all exceptional children must be delivered through a clearly visible and directly funded process, allocated and monitored by an appropriate division of each Ministry. The Ministry of Education and the local school boards should ensure the provision for and monitoring of all funds designated for special education to guarantee the accountability of all spending. Coincidentally, funding for special education must not be to the detriment of regular education programs and services.

Policy Statement 4

Inter-ministerial co-operation should be encouraged to increase the effectiveness in identifying and providing those services essential to the various stages in the development of exceptional children and youth:

- PRE-SCHOOL SERVICES
- SCHOOL ENTRY
- ON-GOING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
- SCHOOL LEAVING

While the provincial government presently requires early identification procedures at the Primary level, it is recognized that many children, particularly the exceptional, may not be voluntarily enrolled in the Junior and Senior Kindergartens. Therefore, it is important that the identification of and the provisions for "at risk" children be completed at the earliest time prior to school entry. Where appropriate, immediate educational/treatment programs and services should be initiated as a preventative measure to overcome delays or gaps in development. This may require the delivery of educational programs and services prior to school entry and will necessitate the co-operation of both educators and community agencies. If these provisions are delivered outside the school, adequate communication and the exchange of appropriate information must be assured when the child is transferred to the educational setting, so that relevant and consistent delivery of assistance can be guaranteed.

To ensure that educational personnel are aware of the exceptionalities of their students, adequate tracking procedures must be developed to follow each exceptional pupil through the elementary, the secondary and, where applicable, the post-secondary program.

Further, upon leaving the educational setting, appropriate programs and services must be maintained to ensure the placement of the individual as a contributing member of society to the limit of his or her potential.

Policy Statement 5

Regional information data banks of current services should be established in Ontario so that all inquiries may be answered quickly and effectively.

It is recommended that, in each region, one information data bank should be established to provide comprehensive information about all potential services available to assist all exceptional persons throughout the Province. These information data banks should be readily accessible to all who wish to obtain specific information related to those agencies capable of providing specific services. The co-operative efforts of various Ministries in the collection, development and dissemination of this information should assist in expeditious and effective access by all.

Policy Statement 6

The Provincial Government should continue to maintain, within the structure of the Ministry of Education, a senior official and supporting personnel to ensure that the needs of exceptional children are met throughout the Province.

The Provincial Government must maintain within its administrative structure, personnel who are easily accessible, highly competent, and knowledgeable in special education theory and current teaching practices. They must be capable of providing relevant and practical counselling to administrators and teachers within the school systems.

Policy Statement 7

The Provincial Government should continue to review and develop regulations regarding training and certification of all persons entering the teaching profession.

Historically, institutions such as those for the blind, deaf or the mentally retarded operated training programs for teachers and other personnel required to work with exceptional children. Some highly specialized training is still offered in some areas of exceptionality, although those persons receiving the training may not be recognized as having teacher certification in Ontario.

The Ontario Ministry of Education requires special certification of teachers being assigned to special education classes or programs. The programs of study leading to certification have traditionally been prepared and presented by the Ministry either in summer or winter training sessions. Courses in Special Education, recently offered at the Faculties of Education, have been successfully developed and implemented. At the present time, Ontario is one of a minority of Canadian provinces requiring a degree of specialized training of teachers prior to teaching a special education class. Often prospective teachers of regular classes are encouraged to experience a minimal number of special education courses as a component in their undergraduate work.

While the "grandfather clause" may be applied to regulations requiring specific teacher training, all teachers should be encouraged to receive special education training and be allowed sufficient time to acquire such training, prior to meeting any legislated qualifications deemed necessary for the teaching of special education programs and classes.

Programs of study leading to prescribed levels of certification provided by Faculties of Education under the supervision of the Ministry of Education should continue. In light of the current emphasis on special education and the integration of exceptional pupils into the regular class setting, all teachers should be encouraged to participate in these programs. The continued provision of certificate courses in special education will do much to promote the cause of exceptional children and youth across Ontario.

Policy Statement 8

Provincial legislation should permit persons who are not qualified teachers, but who have successful experience and specialized training, to work with exceptional children in schools under the supervision of a qualified educator.

An area of exceptionality may require persons who need not be fully qualified teachers, but who with specialized training could be effective in meeting the needs of individual pupils. Provincial legislation should permit such persons to work with exceptional children under the supervision of a qualified teacher or administrator. Teacher aides, educational assistants, speech therapists, child care workers and early childhood educators would be considered in this category.

Policy Statement 9

The Ministry of Education should continue to conduct and co-ordinate curriculum research and development, including the publishing of research data, curriculum guidelines and support documents.

During the past several years in Ontario, local curriculum research and development has been encouraged by the Ministry of Education. This local curriculum effort is highly desirable, since educators should be involved in the curriculum design and implementation processes. However, in practice, it is nearly impossible for fully occupied and dedicated educators to set aside adequate time to devote to curriculum research and development as it should be carried out. Moreover, duplication may result as several groups from across the Province frequently work on similar curricula. The Ministry of Education should assume greater responsibility for the development of general curriculum guidelines to incorporate references to exceptional children; for conducting continual, ongoing curriculum research and development; and, for co-ordinating local curriculum development.

Policy Statement 10

The Ministry of Education should establish instructional materials centres to select, evaluate, and develop materials for use in the education of exceptional children.

In dealing with exceptional children, special books and materials are often required. If teachers are aware of such instructional materials, they often do not have the time to evaluate the potential effectiveness or practicality of such materials in the most efficient manner. The Ministry of Education should provide leadership to develop a service to all teachers of exceptional children, such as an instructional materials centre. Here a permanent staff, working with the schools, could collect, evaluate and develop a current inventory of recommended books, instructional materials or other resources for reference or loan to interested teachers prior to purchase.

3 Organization And Administration For The Education Of Exceptional Children And Youth Within The Local Jurisdiction

INTRODUCTION

A **Planning Guide for School Boards for the Development of Comprehensive Programs and Services in Special Education** was published to assist Ontario school officials:

- in assessing their current local special education practices, programs and levels of service;
- in predicting the services required by The Education Amendment Act, 1980;
- in identifying needed resources; and,
- in developing a five year plan to reach full implementation and equality of educational opportunity for all exceptional pupils by September 1985.

The Ontario Ministry of Education defined exceptional pupils, categories of exceptionality and hard to serve pupils, special education programs and services, and published a **Special Education Information Handbook, 1981** and several curriculum support documents. Legislation included the establishment, by school boards, of Special Education Advisory Committees. The legislation also required every board to establish Identification, Placement and Review Committees and provision was made for Special Education Appeal Board(s) and Tribunal(s).

Since the Ontario Ministry of Education has the ultimate responsibility to ensure the provision of appropriate education for the children and youth of the province, it requires an annual report from each board to indicate that the needs and exceptionalities of individual students continue to be adequately met.

Policy Statement 11

Each school board should prepare an annual report which states the current philosophy and policies of the Board regarding special education; outlines the nature and extent of existing programs; and, clearly defines a projected commitment to the provision of services for exceptional children and youth. The annual report of each school board should be filed with the Ministry of Education to be placed in a data centre or published in a composite report, indicating the nature of special education programs available or projected in each jurisdiction.

This composite report would be of value to parents who are moving to another locale and whose children require special education services and programs. Also, it will serve as a necessary feed-back mechanism to school boards and provide a comparative overview for educational administrators regarding their present program delivery. It will become a self-evaluation measure of existing programs within a board, and serve as an informative guide for future planning. Equal opportunity will then become a more realistic goal for all educational services for exceptional children and youth.

Policy Statement 12

The Ministry of Education should develop computerized lists of acceptable placements for hard to serve pupils, to be updated annually. This list should be available to all Boards in Ontario.

School boards must help parents find a suitable placement for a hard to serve pupil and a computerized list of such potential services is a necessity. Annual updating will provide information on the current state of existing services and point directions for future expansion.

Policy Statement 13

All supervisory officers and special education administrators responsible for exceptional children must have special education experience and/or specialist certification by September 1985.

It is important that the intent of the responsibility legislation be fully understood by supervisory staff. Equally important is an appreciation of the role and function of the Identification, Placement and Review Committee; the preparation of viable programs for the education of exceptional children; and, the knowledge and practice of effective teacher interventions and techniques. With full implementation of the legislation expected by September 1985, this date appears to be realistic for the upgrading of supervisory staff qualifications.

Policy Statement 14

Co-operatively, the Ministry of Education, the Faculties of Education and the Community Colleges should initiate a wide range of training and upgrading courses for all personnel working with exceptional children and youth.

Persons charged with administration, evaluation or the teaching of special education programs at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels should be provided the opportunity to become qualified or to upgrade their skills.

It is anticipated that many supervisory staff will both request and require certification in special education. Student teachers need specialized programming and should be required to serve internships in specialized facilities before they are granted a special education teaching certificate. Regular class teachers with no special education experience or certification should be given in-service sessions relative to the needs of the exceptional children in their classes. Special class teachers will need to update their own knowledge and skills.

Professional updating should be offered, utilizing the expertise of instructors available from within the local board, a faculty of education or community college. The specific needs of supervisors, principals, teachers and paraprofessionals should be assessed and relevant in-service programs developed. A variety of optional courses should be provided. Individualized study; placing the uninitiated with an identified competent teacher for a required time; mandatory attendance and participation at a series of in-service sessions; or, sending the teacher to a specific accredited course are recommended means to accomplish the required upgrading. Community colleges should be encouraged to offer related courses for paraprofessionals, volunteers and teacher aides.

Policy Statement 15

Compensatory practices should be developed when class numbers are augmented by the integration of children with special needs.

Children in regular grades are entitled to equal opportunities for appropriate education. When children with special needs are integrated into the regular classroom, some provision must be made so that all children receive the special help they require. Trained volunteers and aides could help teachers maintain an appropriate program for all children in each class.

Resource teachers in every school, in addition to providing specific instruction to meet individual student needs, should be available to assist the regular classroom teacher to develop required programs. Regular class teachers should receive specific training to work effectively with support staff.

Policy Statement 16

Maximum class sizes should be flexible, depending upon the type and severity of the disabilities, the number and intensity of programs provided for the children in the class.

While legislation states definitive maximum numbers for class size within each exceptionality, these numbers may have little relation to the specific needs of individual children. Until further research can define the effectiveness of an ideal class size for each exceptionality, it is recommended that there continue to be flexibility in class size to meet identified needs.

Policy Statement 17

The Ministry of Education should continue to provide identified grants for special education programs to ensure that adequate funding is provided and that other educational programs are not subsidizing or being subsidized by funds designated for special education programs and services.

A separate funding grant is essential in order to see clearly what monies are available for special education programs, as distinct from the grants for regular programs. With the increased emphasis on special education, as a result of responsibility legislation, it is of utmost importance to maintain open and relatively simple accounting systems in order to ensure that funds specified for special education programs are allocated for that purpose.

Policy Statement 18

Qualified, experienced and successful personnel with definite responsibilities for exceptional children should continue to be retained within the school systems of the Province of Ontario.

It is necessary to ensure that exceptional children get the special assistance which they require. Access for exceptional pupils to a quality education may be facilitated as dedicated and enthusiastic educators raise the awareness of others relative to the needs of the exceptional and their potential to learn in an environment modified to meet those needs. The services of highly qualified persons who can represent student interests, throughout all phases of their educational careers, is strongly recommended. Special education consultants, resource teachers, and/or specially trained master teachers should be employed by school boards for this service.

Policy Statement 19

All school boards should provide specific in-service training to assist teachers in dealing effectively with parents/guardians.

The family is recognized as the single most important unit in our society to influence the lives of children. The Education Act, 1980, and the accompanying regulations acknowledge the primary rights and obligations of parents/guardians related to the education of the individual child. These include: the option, where school boards provide such programs, of enrolling the child in a Junior Kindergarten or Senior Kindergarten program prior to compulsory school age; the right to an interview with the Identification, Placement and Review Committee; the right to refuse or give consent to certain assessments, i.e. psychological; the right to appeal the determination of the Identification, Placement and Review Committee regarding whether or not the child may be deemed to be an exceptional pupil; and, the right to appeal the determination of the Committee in respect of the placement of the pupil in a special education program. Additional rights regarding consent for change of placement, review and further appeals are also provided. In order to make sound judgments and informed decisions about a child's education and to fulfill the family's obligations to each child, parents must have access to all available and necessary information.

Therefore, communication and co-operation between the home and the school should be fostered to encourage a mutual feeling of trust and commitment. Principals must endeavour to establish whatever structures are needed to create a positive partnership with parents in the design and implementation of educational programs. Teachers must develop the necessary skills to encourage parents to participate in both formal and informal discussion; to express their feelings about the child's educational progress; to help parents actively seek assistance in meeting the needs of the child, whether physical, intellectual, emotional or social; and, to actively participate in the ongoing development and evaluation of the child's educational program.

To this end, school boards should utilize all the time, human resources and leadership skills at their disposal in the development of in-service programs which will encourage open communication and co-operative sharing between teachers and parents relative to their child's educational program.

Policy Statement 20

All school boards should encourage and actively seek the support and co-operation of community resources to maximize the development of all children to their potential.

In recent years, numerous scientific advances and societal changes have had a major impact on the delivery of services to exceptional children. There is a growing awareness related to the deleterious effects of poverty, malnutrition, environmental pollution, drug abuse, stress, poor health practices, family breakdown and child abuse. New techniques in medical intervention, the advances in technology and changes in the delivery of health, educational and social programs have had far-reaching implications in providing optimal opportunities for exceptional children. Often, changes outside of the educational setting are reflected inside the educational setting at an unsatisfactory rate and at too minimal a degree.

A more active involvement by educators with the resources available in the community should be encouraged. There should be an awareness of the range of specialized expertise within existing community resources. Educational and community personnel should be encouraged to share knowledge and skills in providing a unified approach to the delivery of comprehensive programs and services to meet the needs of all exceptional pupils. The sharing of direct service delivery by both educators and community resource personnel should be encouraged. The participation of other interested service groups, the parents, and the children themselves, where appropriate, should be encouraged to ensure a co-ordinated focus of community resources in meeting the needs of the exceptional.

4 Identification, Placement, Assessment And Programming

Policy Statement 21

The identification and continuing assessment of children's learning abilities and needs should begin prior to school entry and be a continual process throughout their school years. In school, the emphasis should be on teacher observation, assisted by resource and support services.

Every child is unique. Educational programs must relate not only to the child's learning strengths and disabilities, but must also reflect the rate and style of learning. In order to enhance the child's learning strengths and assist in overcoming or compensating for any disabilities, effective assessment must be an ongoing process at all levels.

The Education Amendment Act, 1980 requires school boards to develop and implement early identification procedures. While it is recognized that this is an integral component in the recognition and provision for individual pupil differences, it must be stressed that care should be taken to address those differences without labelling the child.

The early identification, as well as the ongoing assessment, includes the day-to-day observations by teachers who have had training in assessment techniques and child development and may necessitate the availability of an interdisciplinary team of specialists.

While formal testing by qualified specialists may be employed on occasion, the emphasis should be on the educational assessment made by the classroom teacher in the areas of intellectual, communication, physical, and social-emotional development.

Policy Statement 22

The assessment information gathered both in early identification and during ongoing assessment should be utilized in planning an appropriate educational program for the individual child.

The assessment information recorded by the classroom teacher and/or any resource personnel should form the basis from which a program plan for each child is developed. Consideration of the style, rate of learning and developmental stage of the child should be integral components in the development of appropriate teaching strategies. The program should be designed to enhance strengths. Compensatory techniques may be utilized where severe handicaps are identified.

Policy Statement 23

Labels should apply to the special education program, rather than to the child.

Any child needing additional program assistance beyond that available in the regular classroom, may be referred to an Identification, Placement and Review Committee. It is the responsibility of this Committee to determine whether or not the child is exceptional and to determine the placement of the child in a special education program: self-contained or resource assistance.

When the child has been designated as exceptional, a label, if necessary, should only identify the appropriate program. While the label may facilitate administrative procedures, the educational program should be structured to meet the pupil's assessed abilities and potential.

Policy Statement 24

A range of special education programs and services should be provided so that, for most pupils, the required special education program can be provided in their home school. Special class or school facilities should be available for those who require an intensive and highly specialized program.

It is desirable to maintain students within as normal an environment as is possible. For this reason, the required special education program may not be a self-contained special class setting but, rather, a withdrawal program or some degree of special education resource assistance within the regular classroom. It may include assistance to the classroom teacher in the development of specific programs or teaching strategies. This does not negate the fact that self-contained special education settings are often an appropriate alternative for those who demonstrate a need for this type of educational setting. The Reynold's or Cascade Model provides one reference in determining the intensity and degree of segregation to be considered in the delivery of special education programs and services.

5 Teacher Recruitment, Preparation, Continuing Education And Evaluation

Policy Statement 25

The philosophy and recommendations contained in **Standards for Educators of Exceptional Children in Canada,** and **Compulsory Foundations in Relation to the Exception Child for all Student Teachers at the Ontario Teacher Education Colleges and at the Faculties of Education** are endorsed in principle.

In 1971, **Standards for Educators of Exceptional Children in Canada** (SEECC Report), the report on teacher education was released by The Canadian Council for Exceptional Children. This report provided extensive recommendations which offered a base of comprehensive planning for teacher recruitment, training and continuing education.

In 1978, **Compulsory Foundations in Relation to the Exceptional Child for all Student Teachers at the Ontario Teacher Education Colleges and at the Faculties of Education,** a position paper prepared by the Professional Standards Committee of the Ontario Federation of Chapters, The Council for Exceptional Children, was released. The paper purported to be,

> "...a statement of policy regarding the basic preparation of new teachers so that they can program appropriately to meet the needs of exceptional children in their classrooms," because, "At present there is no consistent compulsory foundation program in Special Education for all new teachers-in-training in the Province of Ontario."

This document dealt not only with policies as stated in the SEECC Report but with the competencies and practical experiences of teachers who work with exceptional children.

The directions and recommendations contained in both of the aforementioned documents are held in high regard as relevant, practical and applicable to current teacher education programs in Ontario.

Policy Statement 26

Research directed toward developing criteria for the selection of prospective teachers of exceptional children is urgently needed and should be initiated as soon as possible by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

There is a demand for teachers with the specific skills necessary to assist children who present a wide range of learning problems. It is essential that these teachers possess a desire to work with these children and that they develop expertise in the individualization of instruction.

Policy Statement 27

All teachers require training in the identification of individual differences and in the development of relevant teaching strategies to individualize instruction which will meet the needs of their pupils.

It is evident that students with specialized needs are to be provided with viable educational programs within the regular classrooms; and, that early and ongoing identification is to continue in regular classrooms. Therefore, **every** classroom teacher will require training in identifying learning abilities and needs; in developing teaching strategies which will assist those students identified as needing special assistance; in adapting instructional strategies and curricula to the special needs of exceptional pupils; in delivering individualized instruction; in monitoring each pupil's progress; and, in working with both professional and paraprofessional support personnel. Although support personnel should be readily available, the major responsibility remains with the regular classroom teacher.

Policy Statement 28

During their initial professional preparation, all teachers in training should develop basic competencies in working with exceptional children in schools.

Since the philosophy of remediation and rehabilitation requires special assistance to exceptional children on the part of regular class teachers, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities must encourage teacher-training institutions to incorporate into their programs the means for developing basic competencies in appreciating, understanding and programming for the needs of exceptional children.

Policy Statement 29

The Ontario Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities should emphasize the special education component of programs in all Ontario teacher-training centres.

The projected trend in Ontario appears to be the inclusion, wherever possible, of students with exceptionalities in regular classrooms and, since these children are to be found in every part of Ontario, appropriate teacher education should be available. This may be accomplished through in-service and extension programs provided by all universities having faculties of education.

Policy Statement 30

It is recommended that the policy of granting basic certificates be continued, with endorsations in the various areas of exceptionality. Local school boards should be required to employ teachers with qualifications pertinent to their teaching assignment.

Teachers who work with exceptional children should have educational teacher-training appropriate to the specific exceptionality for which they are responsible. Initially, this may require a "grandfathering" statement for staff currently working with exceptional children.

In lieu of separate individual certificates, endorsations in the various areas of exceptionality should be recorded on the Ontario Teachers' Qualifications Record Card.

Policy Statement 31

The Ministry of Education should provide regulations governing the updating of qualifications at prescribed intervals for all educational personnel responsible for special education programs and services.

In this era of rapidly expanding knowledge, no certificate should be considered permanent. Teachers and administrators should keep abreast of developments in their selected area of expertise. In order to maintain valid certification, qualifications should be updated at prescribed intervals.

Policy Statement 32

Continuing education for the upgrading of teachers should be available through courses and workshops provided by the faculties of education, the Ministry of Education and the local school boards at the undergraduate, graduate, credit and non-credit levels.

Future plans for developing more highly trained personnel for the exceptional child's education will ensure a greater degree of teacher competency. It is essential that teachers with basic teaching certification, as well as special education teachers already in the field, be provided with opportunities to upgrade their competencies.

Policy Statement 33

Techniques and procedures required in the teaching of exceptional pupils must be considered by evaluators of special education personnel.

The policies and procedures for staff evaluation, as developed by the Ministry of Education and by school boards, should be expanded to include those special techniques and procedures required in teaching exceptional pupils.

Teachers of exceptional pupils should be involved in the co-ordinated program of teacher/staff evaluation developed by each school system.

6 Evaluation In The Education Of Exceptional Children And Youth

Policy Statement 34

School boards should develop and implement a variety of methods to evaluate all aspects of special education.

Exceptional children require pupil-centered programs based on specific objectives and incorporating a consistent educational philosophy. Acceptance or rejection of any educational program by principal or staff often determines its degree of success.

The principal, staff and support personnel are responsible for the development of a variety of evaluative measures and strategies upon which to base school standards and, ultimately, individual pupil progress.

Therefore, school boards should ensure that both school staff and support services personnel are directly involved in the educational evaluation of all aspects of special education.

Policy Statement 35

To ensure the relevancy of the individual plan, it should be based on and modified by the results of on-going evaluation of pupil performance and program.

Responsibility legislation mandates that the exceptional pupil receive a special education program based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation. This process should ensure:

- that specially trained personnel assess individual students;
- that the assessment includes teacher observation, informal testing, educational records and home visits or parent interviews in addition to the more formal, traditional tests;
- that, where appropriate, the pupil as well as the parent be involved in planning the individual program modifications;
- that the program modifications be compatible with the learning needs, potential abilities and interests of each pupil;
- that teachers design programs containing specific objectives;
- that teaching strategies be directed towards the fulfilment of the objectives, thereby improving the pupil's skills;
- that the program be continually monitored to objectively measure growth and development; and,
- that any necessary modifications be appropriate to the diagnosed needs of the pupil.

Where the results of such an approach are adequately and meaningfully recorded and communicated to the pupil and to the parent:

- the pupil will gain self-respect and esteem and strive for greater achievements;
- the parent should benefit from involvement in the program and an increased awareness of the pupil's progress; and,
- the teacher should benefit from knowing that the program and teaching strategies are initiating a sense of accomplishment. This knowledge will be based on objective data and the measured growth will act as a catalyst in promoting the learning process.

Policy Statement 36

In accordance with Regulation 338, principals must monitor all information admitted to the Ontario School Record and provide for the annual review of the file to ensure that:

- the data is essential, current and relevant to the development of the educational program.
- unessential, irrelevant or outdated data is removed and returned to the appropriate Board supervisory personnel for storage or to be destroyed.
- adequate control for confidentiality is assured.
- access to the records is according to Ministry regulations.

The evaluation of students represents a commitment by the evaluator to an ongoing process of observation, assessment, diagnosis, program effectiveness rating and the utilization of good judgment in pertinent record keeping. Effective evaluation practices will enhance the learning environment and build self-esteem and respect for the teacher/evaluator.

In light of the emphasis on parent involvement and the anticipated utilization of community resource personnel, it is important that the language of evaluation be understood by everyone involved in the educational process. Determinations of the Identification, Placement and Review Committee must reflect sound educational theory and practice, be interpreted by the classroom teacher, be translated into realistic classroom practice and be communicated in a meaningful way to both the student and parent.

Records of a student's progress, including documentation of diagnosed needs and medical or psychological assessments must be carefully and consistently recorded, effectively co-ordinated and adequately monitored. Methods of sharing this information with appropriate persons must be developed to efficiently expedite the transfer/exchange of information while respecting the rights of the pupil and the parents to confidentiality of information.

There is no panacean approach to the education of the exceptional. A carefully monitored full spectrum of special education programs and services must be implemented so that each individual, regardless of exceptionality, is afforded that unique opportunity to achieve maximum potential. With the involvement, understanding, support, and help of the parents and community, optimal educational opportunity for all children will be realized.

COMPENDIUM

The Ontario Federation of Chapters, The Council for Exceptional Children, recommends the following policies for the education of exceptional children and youth in Ontario:

GENERAL

Policy Statement 1

All children and youth should be offered educational programs, suitable to their individual learning needs and abilities, exceptionalities notwithstanding.

Educators in both special and regular education should provide a variety of educational opportunities which will encourage the development of total individuals to their fullest potential.

Policy Statement 25

The philosophy and recommendations contained in **Standards for Educators of Exceptional Children in Canada**, and **Compulsory Foundations in Relation to the Exception Child for all Student Teachers at the Ontario Teacher Education Colleges and at the Faculties of Education** are endorsed in principle.

LEGISLATION

Definitions and Rights

Policy Statement 3

Legislation should continue to be monitored to ensure that exceptional children maintain their right to an education and/or care and treatment and that appropriate services are delivered and supported through adequate funding.

Jurisdictional Responsibilities and Services

Policy Statement 4

Inter-ministerial co-operation should be encouraged to increase the effectiveness in identifying and providing those services essential to the various stages in the development of exceptional children and youth:

- PRE-SCHOOL SERVICES
- SCHOOL ENTRY
- ON-GOING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
- SCHOOL LEAVING

Policy Statement 20

All school boards should encourage and actively seek the support and co-operation of community resources to maximize the development of all children to their potential.

Teacher Certification

Policy Statement 7

The Provincial Government should continue to review and develop regulations regarding training and certification of all persons entering the teaching profession.

Policy Statement 8

Provincial legislation should permit persons who are not qualified teachers, but who have successful experience and specialized training, to work with exceptional children in schools under the supervision of a qualified educator.

Policy Statement 28

During their initial professional preparation, all teachers in training should develop basic competencies in working with exceptional children in schools.

Policy Statement 30

It is recommended that the policy of granting basic certificates be continued, with endorsations in the various areas of exceptionality. Local school boards should be required to employ teachers with qualifications pertinent to their teaching assignment.

Policy Statement 14

Co-operatively, the Ministry of Education, the Faculties of Education and the Community Colleges should initiate a wide range of training and upgrading courses for all personnel working with exceptional children and youth.

Policy Statement 31

The Ministry of Education should provide regulations governing the updating of qualifications at prescribed intervals for all educational personnel responsible for special education programs and services.

Policy Statement 2

All provincial acts and regulations concerning the education of exceptional children should be compiled into one publication, with provision made for cyclical review.

The treatment, social services, and health acts concerning the care and treatment of children should also be compiled into one publication with provision made for cyclical review.

FINANCE

Policy Statement 17

The Ministry of Education should continue to provide identified grants for special education programs to ensure that adequate funding is provided and that other educational programs are not subsidizing or being subsidized by funds designated for special education programs and services.

ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANIZATION

Policy Statement 4

Inter-ministerial co-operation should be encouraged to increase the effectiveness in identifying and providing those services essential to the various stages in the development of exceptional children and youth:

- PRE-SCHOOL SERVICES
- SCHOOL ENTRY
- ON-GOING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
- SCHOOL LEAVING

Policy Statement 6

The Provincial Government should continue to maintain, within the structure of the Ministry of Education, a senior official and supporting personnel to ensure that the needs of exceptional chilcren are met throughout the Province.

Policy Statement 9

The Ministry of Education should continue to conduct and co-ordinate curriculum research and development, including the publishing of research data, curriculum guidelines and support documents.

Policy Statement 10

The Ministry of Education should establish instructional materials centres to select, evaluate, and develop materials for use in the education of exceptional children.

Policy Statement 11

Each school board should prepare an annual report which states the current philosophy and policies of the Board regarding special education; outlines the nature and extent of existing programs; and, clearly defines a projected commitment to the provision of services for exceptional children and youth. The annual report of each school board should be filed with the Ministry of Education to be placed in a data centre or published in a composite report, indicating the nature of special education programs available or projected in each jurisdiction.

Policy Statement 13

All supervisory officers and special education administrators responsible for exceptional children must have special education experience and/or specialist certification by September 1985.

Policy Statement 24

A range of special education programs and services should be provided so that, for most pupils, the required special education program can be provided in their home school. Special class or school facilities should be available for those who require an intensive and highly specialized program.

ASSESSMENT AND PLACEMENT

Policy Statement 4

Inter-ministerial co-operation should be encouraged to increase the effectiveness in identifying and providing those services essential to the various stages in the development of exceptional children and youth:

- PRE-SCHOOL SERVICES
- SCHOOL ENTRY
- ON-GOING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
- SCHOOL LEAVING

Policy Statement 21

The identification and continuing assessment of children's learning abilities and needs should begin prior to school entry and be a continual process throughout their school years. In school, the emphasis should be on teacher observation, assisted by resource and support services.

Policy Statement 22

The assessment information gathered both in early identification and during ongoing assessment should be utilized in planning an appropriate educational program for the individual child.

Policy Statement 12

The Ministry of Education should develop computerized lists of acceptable placements for hard to serve pupils, to be updated annually. This list should be available to all Boards in Ontario.

Policy Statement 23

Labels should apply to the special education program, rather than to the child.

Policy Statement 35

To ensure the relevancy of the individual plan, it should be based on and modified by the results of on-going evaluation of pupil performance and program.

Policy Statement 27

All teachers require training in the identification of individual differences and in the development of relevant teaching strategies to individualize instruction which will meet the needs of their pupils.

Policy Statement 15

Compensatory practices should be developed when class numbers are augmented by the integration of children with special needs.

Policy Statement 16

Maximum class sizes should be flexible, depending upon the type and severity of the disabilities, the number and intensity of programs provided for the children in the class.

TEACHING PERSONNEL

General

Policy Statement 18

Qualified, experienced and successful personnel with definite responsibilities for exceptional children should continue to be retained within the school systems of the Province of Ontario.

Policy Statement 27

All teachers require training in the identification of individual differences and in the development of relevant teaching strategies to individualize instruction which will meet the needs of their pupils.

Policy Statement 30

It is recommended that the policy of granting basic certificates be continued, with endorsations in the various areas of exceptionality. Local school boards should be required to employ teachers with qualifications pertinent to their teaching assignment.

Policy Statement 25

The philosophy and recommendations contained in **Standards for Educators of Exceptional Children in Canada,** and **Compulsory Foundations in Relation to the Exception Child for all Student Teachers at the Ontario Teacher Education Colleges and at the Faculties of Education** are endorsed in principle.

Recruitment

Policy Statement 26

Research directed toward developing criteria for the selection of prospective teachers of exceptional children is urgently needed and should be initiated as soon as possible by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

Policy Statement 28

During their initial professional preparation, all teachers in training should develop basic competencies in working with exceptional children in schools.

Policy Statement 29

The Ontario Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities should emphasize the special education component of programs in all Ontario teacher-training centres.

Policy Statement 32

Continuing education for the upgrading of teachers should be available through courses and workshops provided by the faculties of education, the Ministry of Education and the local school boards at the undergraduate, graduate, credit and non-credit levels.

Evaluation

Policy Statement 33

Techniques and procedures required in the teaching of exceptional pupils must be considered by evaluators of special education personnel.

Continuing Education

Policy Statement 31

The Ministry of Education should provide regulations governing the updating of qualifications at prescribed intervals for all educational personnel responsible for special education programs and services.

Policy Statement 32

Continuing education for the upgrading of teachers should be available through courses and workshops provided by the faculties of education, the Ministry of Education and the local school boards at the undergraduate, graduate, credit and non-credit levels.

PUPIL EVALUATION AND RECORDS

Policy Statement 5

Regional information data banks of current services should be established in Ontario so that all inquiries may be answered quickly and effectively.

Policy Statement 34

School boards should develop and implement a variety of methods to evaluate all aspects of special education.

Policy Statement 35

To ensure the relevancy of the individual plan, it should be based on and modified by the results of on-going evaluation of pupil performance and program.

Policy Statement 36

In accordance with Regulation 338, principals must monitor all information admitted to the Ontario School Record and provide for the annual review of the file to ensure that:

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- adequate control for confidentiality is assured.
- access to the records is according to Ministry regulations.

Requests for copies of **We Are Not Alike: policies for responsible education** may be forwarded to:

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